

Fork Fire—the Nation's highest priority—told me this week that the behavior of the fire is unprecedented. Because of all of the beetle-killed timber, unnaturally dense forest, and dry conditions, the fire has acted in a way that defies computer models and has been incredibly devastating.

The most tragic part of all of this is the occurrence of these forest fires could be reduced, if not outright prevented, with commonsense healthy forest management.

With this in mind, I have put forward the following resolution:

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that allocating the appropriate resources to wildland fire management is needed to protect the environment, the economy and the people of the United States, and for other purposes.

Whereas, the thoughts and prayers of the Members of the House of Representatives go out to the individuals and families who have lost loved ones and their homes to wildfire;

Whereas, the Members of the House of Representatives express the utmost gratitude to wildland firefighters and first responders who bravely protect life and property;

Whereas, nearly 10 million acres of land burned in the United States in 2012;

Whereas, the acreage burned by wildfires has steadily increased over the past decade;

Whereas, the most destructive fire in the history of the State of Colorado and the largest fire in the history of the State of New Mexico destroyed hundreds of homes and hundreds of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat in 2012;

Whereas, Federal forest and land management officials continue to request fewer funds to fight wildfires;

Whereas, the funding available for wildland fire suppression in the Wildland Fire Management Account of the Forest Service was cut by \$461 million from fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2013;

Whereas, the Wildland Fire Hazardous Fuels Reduction Account of the Forest Service was cut by \$22 million from fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2013, and the latest budget request asks for another \$116 million decrease;

Whereas, the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program, a program that benefits local economies and improves the overall health of the landscape, has taken a 20 percent cut in funding over the past 2 years;

Whereas, senior Forest Service officials have described a Federal land management system hamstrung by "analysis paralysis;"

Whereas, decades of Federal mismanagement have increased fuel loads on Federal forest land and led to increased risk of catastrophic wildfire;

Whereas, the U.S. Forest Service has replaced responsible, environmentally sound timber thinning with allowing forests to burn through overcrowded forests;

Whereas, the bark beetle epidemic has destroyed 40 million acres of forest in North America; and

Whereas, academic studies indicate that bark beetle-infected trees can still be salvaged for timber to be used in mills and contribute to small businesses and local economies.

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

Allocating the appropriate resources to wildland fire management is needed to protect the environment, the economy, and the people of the United States;

The bravery of the men and women who risk their lives to extinguish these conflagrations can never be questioned;

A healthy forest policy must include prescribed thinning;

Funding to fight and prevent wildfires is essential to public safety, environmental protection, and economic growth;

People who live in or near our national forests have a right to expect the greatest possible protection for their homes and properties;

The government should not continue to acquire more land when the hundreds of millions of acres already controlled by the government are mismanaged; and

The Forest Service should proactively manage Federal forest lands in a manner that protects life and property, prevents catastrophic wildfire, promotes forest and watershed health, and creates jobs and economic development in the forest products industry.

I invite all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in standing with the people of Colorado, standing with all in the West who have been impacted by catastrophic wildfire. Join me in thanking the firefighters who are risking their lives to protect others. Join me in the action to prevent future devastation and restore our forests to health.

□ 1030

EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER THE LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Minutes ago, a 5-4 decision, written by Justice Kennedy, ruled that DOMA is a violation of the Equal Protection Clause. Today's decision is a monumental step forward in the long march towards GLBT equality.

Forty years ago, I chaired a committee hearing in the Oregon legislature on discrimination based on sexual orientation. It was an eye-opening experience for me. It was the first time someone ever acknowledged to me their sexual orientation, let alone the discrimination they faced living a life of repression and fear. In the course of those 40 years, it has been a privilege to have been able to help fight to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation.

We have watched a political movement emerge from the ashes of defeat, on discriminatory ballot measures across the country. It's exciting to see how this movement has been led at first by the people in the GLBT community, who refused to accept defeat, who, despite significant personal sacrifice, have stepped forward to declare who they are, who they love, what they want, and why they want it.

It has been encouraging to watch business leaders step forward, no longer just the more progressive elements of the business community. Lately, it has become mainstream to acknowledge that diversity in the workforce demands a nondiscrimination policy—that regardless of a person's sexual orientation and to whom they choose to commit, it makes no

difference in the eyes of a thoughtful, successful employer.

It was exciting for me to watch and to participate in this year's Pride Parade in Portland, to note the leadership of virtually every institution in our community—businesses like Nike and Standard Insurance, Northwest Natural, grocery stores, colleges, hospitals and health professionals, universities, and churches—all marching proudly in a show of solidarity, a rejection of discrimination, support for diversity in the workplace for our friends, neighbors and relatives.

Today's Supreme Court decision marks the most significant milestone yet in this struggle. By striking down DOMA, the Supreme Court has cast aside a major barrier to our GLBT friends, neighbors and relatives to be able to live complete lives—to be able to avoid discrimination, the stigma, the economic disadvantage. It's a signal that this will be the final chapter for a society that recognizes the worth of all human beings, acknowledges the right of all human beings to live as they wish, love who they will and be able to enjoy the multiple benefits that come from being involved in committed relationships and legal marriages.

It's not just a milestone for our brothers and sisters in the GLBT community. It's a significant benefit for all society. If one truly believes that marriage is one of the cornerstones that we encourage for committed relationships, for people to be able to raise their families, look after one another in a stable, committed relationship, why shouldn't they be able to marry? Why should the Federal Government refuse to recognize that and discriminate? Some of the most traditional elements of our society who are dragging their feet should be in the forefront in helping lead this charge.

Now, we must be vigilant. There are still pockets of resistance, hostility, bigotry, and discrimination. There are State laws that need to be adjusted, but it will no longer be sanctioned by Federal policy, and that is the critical difference. Once it is no longer legal to discriminate, we are truly in the home stretch for the type of society we want.

This critical step was a narrow 5-4 decision, but it was a victory nonetheless. The path forward is a little more clear, and it's going to be a little easier. But before we start this next chapter, it's fitting that we celebrate this moment—the accomplishment of what it represents and what it will mean for America.

That temple of justice that is the Supreme Court looks a little different this morning, and I hope Americans will appreciate it and think about where we go from here.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.